

## South Precinct Email Community Newsletter

### January 19, 2011



Dear Community Friends:

Welcome to 2011!

#### **"Someone's Knocking At The Door."**

For those of you who are "seasoned" enough to remember the song "Let 'Em In" by Paul McCartney & Wings from 1976 (I know, so last century), it should not be a surprise that we disagree with Sir Paul. Just because someone knocks or rings, door does not mean that you let them in. Recent events drive home reasons for our caution.

#### **"City Employees"**

On Tuesday, January 11th officers responded to two separate incidents of thieves posing as city workers to get access to victims' homes. The two adult male suspects used the ruse of claiming to be from the Water Department. They would then enter the home and wander around turning on faucets and telling the occupants they were checking the water quality. Once inside, one suspect rummaged around while the other distracted the homeowner(s). In one case, jewelry was stolen. It did not appear that anything was stolen in the other.

First, it is very unlikely that any City of Seattle Employee would be going door-to-door and asking for access to your home. The one possible exception would be representatives of Seattle City Light's Powerful Neighborhood Program. These employees have been going door-to-door in select neighborhoods to provide free compact florescent light bulbs (CFLs) showerheads and faucet aerators. They offer to install the CFLs and leave behind the showerhead and faucet aerator for you to install. For more information about this program, contact (206) 449-1132, send an email to [SCL\\_install@seattle.gov](mailto:SCL_install@seattle.gov), or check the following web link: <http://www.seattle.gov/light/install/>

Secondly, any City of Seattle employee will have picture identification that has his/her name, department and serial number on their laminated ID. This ID needs to be prominently displayed and/or produced upon request. If the individual claiming to be from the City does not have a City of Seattle picture ID, s/he is not a City of Seattle employee. Call 911 right away to let us know about such individuals and alert your neighbors to do the same. And do not open the door or let them in. It's okay to talk to people at your door through your door.

#### **"Endorsed by SPD"**

Neighbors reported an individual going door-to-door with flyers that co-opted a previous SPD burglary alert with the SPD logo encouraging residents to contact the number on the flyer for a monitored home security system. The flyer gave the impression that SPD and the individual on the flyer were working together to promote residents getting a home security system from the individual and that SPD was endorsing said individual's business.

Nope. No City of Seattle government entity can endorse a specific commercial enterprise. The Seattle Police Department cannot (nor will) recommend one security company over another. We do not allow our logo to be used to promote private businesses or any commercial venture. If you encounter anyone claiming their commercial enterprise is endorsed by the City of Seattle in general or the Police Department specifically, they are lying. Please call 911 if you encounter these people with SPD lookalike brochures.

Secondly, anyone engaged in door to-door sales **must** have a Picture ID Badge and a copy of their Business License that **must** have the Residential Sales Agent License endorsement on it. **Any other badge or license is invalid.** The ID badge should be prominently displayed and/or produced upon request. Further, door-to-door sales people need to abide by the solicitation rules set forth by the Department of Revenue. These include hours of operation (not before 8am or after 9pm), honoring "no peddlers," "no solicitors," signs and other restrictions. For specific and requirements regarding door-to-door sales, contact the City of Seattle Department of Revenue and Consumer Protection Division at (206)-684-8484, or email: [rca@seattle.gov](mailto:rca@seattle.gov). Regarding door-to-door sellers, it's okay to talk to people at your door through your door, tell them "no thank you," and send them on their way.

### **“Political Canvassers”**

In recent days, there have been numerous reports of young males coming to individual homes, trying to get residents to sign a healthcare reform petition. The subjects(s) have been very insistent and aggressive in getting the residents to open their doors. The subjects(s) did not have any badge identification and were described as unprofessionally dressed. In the accounts of these incidents, none of the residents signed the petition or allowed these individuals access to their homes. Neighbors exercised sound judgment in refusing to open the door for these individuals as well as not giving out their personal information (name, address, signature, and other personal information for which they may have asked) to a stranger.

Political canvassers and signature gatherers do not have the same identification, badging and licensing requirements as commercial door-to-door sales. There are sparse guidelines regarding political contact in residential settings. While there may be no codified requirement for them to do so, canvassers, campaigners and signature gathers should identify whom or what cause they represent and they should honor the restrictions on solicitation hours (8am - 9pm), and “no peddlers,” “no solicitors,” signs. After all, if they irritate you, they are not going to get you to support their cause or candidate.

If you do agree to sign a petition or other form, be aware of what personal identifying information you are giving out. You should never give out banking information or your social security number to any solicitor, whether door-to-door or on-line. If the solicitor asks for a contribution, they should provide a receipt for all monies received, regardless if it is check, credit card or cash. And while they may be insistent that you give a contribution right then and there (which most will), you can be just as insistent that your contribution will be sent to the campaign office or to the organization via US Mail or made on-line, rather than give the contribution to the person at the door.

If the solicitors, canvassers or signature gatherers are aggressive, do not represent an acknowledged cause, refuse to provide some type of identifying documents or literature, or violate the guidelines regarding hours or “no solicitor” signs, alert police and your neighbors. And do not let them in.

Notice a theme here? Do not open your door to those individuals you don't know. It's okay to talk to people at your door through your door. Individuals claiming to be City of Seattle employees will have picture ID; if they don't, they are not legit. Call 911 right away to let us know about suspicious individuals and alert your neighbors to do the same. And do not open the door or let them in.

Until Next time, Take Care and Stay safe

Captain Jim Dermody East Precinct Commander  
Mark Solomon, Crime Prevention Coordinator

Captain Mike Nolan, South Precinct Commander